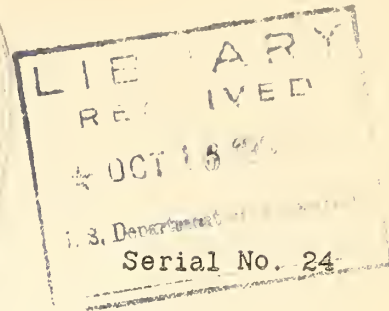
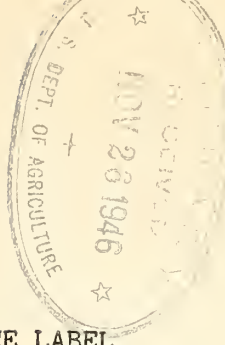


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Excerpt from a Radio Talk
by W. R. Wharton, Chief, Eastern
District, Food and Drug Administration,
U. S. Department of Agriculture,
through WJZ and associated NBC stations,
Tuesday, October 14, 1930



HOW TO READ THE LABEL

Obesity Cures

I shall talk to you today about alleged Obesity Cures and Antifat preparations. I know that those of you who are fat and those of you who think you are fat, and those who expect to be fat will be interested in what I shall have to say and that includes almost all of you. Do you expect me to tell you how to reduce? - Well, listen -

Obesity may result from two causes:

- (1) Over eating and lack of exercise, and
- (2) Abnormal endocrine metabolism or abnormal digestive processes.

Time was when a not uncomfortable amount of weight was considered to add to the attractiveness of an individual - then it was that we heard such terms as 'pleasingly plump' used in a complimentary fashion, but times and customs change and now the craze for "reducing" exists, indeed, it has progressed to a point of absurdity. The desire to achieve slenderness has become a fad which apparently out-fads the faddistas. It is true that the presence of a great excess fat is sometimes a menace to health, but remember that your normal and safe weight may be far above that which you desire or that which would give you a willowy and lithe appearance.

Now the question is - is it safe, is it desirable for you, to attempt to reduce and can you accomplish it - to your satisfaction? In other words, can you reduce and should you reduce?

I am going to tell how to reduce, the only safe way known to science, but before you undertake it, I want you to see your physician and ascertain whether your case is one where the process should be used and if it can be applied with safety.

The only safe and certain way to reduce is by careful diet and proper exercise.

Now you have the answer. Should you attempt to reduce? Ask your physician. How can you reduce? By proper diet and exercise. There is no other safe way unless you are suffering from an endocrinal disease and that requires special treatment by a physician.

If you really have an excess of fat, and that excess is caused by over-eating and lack of exercise, then by all means carefully regulate your diet,

but do so reasonably, for to go to the extreme of starving yourself may be dangerous as the relation of tuberculosis, and anemia, to undernutrition, is well established.

My specific purpose today is to warn you in certain and serious terms to beware of the so-called anti-fat cures which are now being extensively advertised.

The craze or fad which has made the girlish figure stylish has not been overlooked by the charlatans who are ever ready to exploit the public, and literally scores of fake anti-fat medicines and reducing systems are now seemingly flourishing. These range from preparations which are inert and absolutely worthless to preparations containing the powerful drug, thyroid, which is extremely dangerous. They range from simple mechanical devices for massage to complicated machines which may be instruments of torture.

So far as the Food and Drug Act is concerned, manufacturers of anti-fat preparations who have designs on your pocketbooks have no restraints on what they may say in advertisements. They dare not make false, misleading or fraudulent claims on their labels but as I have told you before, the Federal Food and Drugs Act does not apply to advertising. Therefore, you may not believe, you should not believe, you must not believe any advertisements which promise results for obesity remedies and fat reducing preparations.

Here is what some of the advertisements say: "Reduce Easily and Naturally", "No Longer Any Excuse to Be Fat", "Keep Your Shape and You will Keep Your Husband", "How to Get Thin", "Are You Fat? I Once Was and Reduced Myself", "Would You Like to Reduce Yourself One Pound Per Day"? "Why Be Fat?" "World's Famous Treatment For Corpulency", "I Can Make Your Fat Vanish By the Gallon", "Get Rid of That Fat", "Bathing Compound will Reduce Your Weight", They all promise results - Results which are impossible - with safety.

No other class of preparations exploited to humbug the people has had a wider range than these so-called fat reducers. They include the binding apparatus, the reducing machines, the rolling pins, the reducing soaps and bath compounds, the prescriptions and anti-fat preparations, the reducing breads, and the like. When such preparations or systems are used in conjunction with restricted diet, and exercise sometimes weight is removed. This is a result of the diet and exercise rather than of the preparation.

Drug specialists in the United States Department of Agriculture recently conducted a series of tests with a number of these fat-reducing nostrums on employees in the Department who wished to lose surplus weight without injuring their health. One of the most widely advertised of these prescriptions for reducing flesh was tried for a period of six months. Two of the subjects were obliged to stop after taking the medicine for two or three weeks because THAT MEDICINE WAS INJURIOUS TO THEIR HEALTH. A third subject gained 2-1/2 pounds instead of losing flesh. Another subject used an advertised preparation for six months and lost 18 pounds. But the drug specialist said that this was because he ate no bread, butter, starchy food, pastry, sugar, or candy while under observation. The first month after discontinuing the treatment, this same person gained 10 pounds and in three months was back to the weight recorded at the beginning of the treatment.

Under no circumstances should you, if you are using the intelligence

I have been for months insisting upon your using in your own protection, either buy or use any of the preparations which are advertised to appeal to the present prevailing desire to be thin. Such preparations, either are worthless and contain nothing that can possibly have the slightest effect in reducing flesh, or they may be extremely dangerous. Some such preparations which contain thyroid and others which contain poke root are especially dangerous. An expert of the Food and Drug Administration has recently said the promiscuous use of thyroid may prove very harmful. If you use it, do so under the advice of a physician personally familiar with your condition. We have on record an instance of death following an overdose of a preparation containing thyroid.

Among the many fat-reducing frauds, those advertised for rubbing fat away are most interesting. One of these was found on examination by the Food and Drug Administration to consist of soap, just ordinary soap. The idea is to apply this with friction and thus remove the fat wherever it may be in excess. You know that it is the soap that causes the ring around the bath tub, rather than any dissolved body fat. Another scheme employs chemicals to be added to the bath water. These chemicals are of such a nature that they form sort of a curd in the water. After the patient has bathed, this curd, the manufacturer states, contains fat and surplus tissue removed from the body.

And so, my radio friends, if you really want to reduce, you must depend upon careful dieting and proper exercise. These are the safe methods of weight reduction. Dieting and exercise, to be effective, must be continued for long periods. In some cases, there are physical conditions which make it unwise for fat people to try to reduce weight rapidly and the restriction of diet in such cases should be practiced under the constant guidance of a skillful physician. If you are over-eating and not exercising and you are unwilling to remove these causes and keep them removed, then the only thing you can do about it is to accept your excess fat and be cheerful about it. But do not run the risk of losing your health and do not waste your money by patronizing advertised obesity cures. This advice applies not only to you mothers, but it applies also with greater force, to your growing children. Unfortunately, many of the growing young girls of today get the absurd notion that they are too fat, when, as a matter of fact, they are the picture of health and beauty. For the growing girl to diet excessively, to take any of the nostrums, or to take purgatives excessively to keep down weight, is a crime against nature which may be sadly regretted in the future.

In general, you will not find promises of reduction of a pound a day or any other false promise on the labels of such preparations. Labels formerly made such false statements but prosecutions have been brought for misbranding when such false statements have been made and of necessity the manufacturers have removed such statements from their labels. Therefore, compare the claims on the labels of such medicines with the advertising claims made by the manufacturer. If the advertising exceeds the label claims on any medicinal product, then look with suspicion on such a product.

